

Appl. No.: 10/696,821  
Amdt. dated 09/26/2005  
Reply to Office action of March 25, 2005

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A method of joining and sealing conduits, comprising:  
mounting edge trim and a retaining element upon an end of a conduit, wherein the edge trim has a ridge extending outwardly therefrom, such that the retaining element is further from the end of the conduit than the ridge;  
extending a sleeve between the conduits, such that one end of the sleeve covers the ridge on the edge trim; and  
sliding the retaining element over the sleeve and toward the ridge, such that a portion of the sleeve is sandwiched between the retaining element and the ridge, wherein sliding the retaining element over the sleeve comprises compressing at least a portion of the sleeve within the retaining element.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein mounting edge trim comprises bonding the edge trim to the conduit.
3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein sliding the retaining element over the sleeve further comprises ~~compressing the sleeve within the retaining element~~ and displacing the sleeve material to expand on either side of the retaining element.
4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein sliding the retaining element over the sleeve comprises positioning the retaining element such that the retaining element is prevented from moving past the ridge toward the end of the conduit and at least partially restrained from moving away from the ridge due to the displaced sleeve material on a side of retaining element opposite the ridge.
5. (Currently amended) The method ~~of claim 1, further comprising~~ of joining and sealing conduits, comprising:

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mounting edge trim and a retaining element upon an end of a conduit, wherein the edge trim has a ridge extending outwardly therefrom, such that the retaining element is further from the end of the conduit than the ridge;

extending a sleeve between the conduits, such that one end of the sleeve covers the ridge on the edge trim;

sliding the retaining element over the sleeve and toward the ridge, such that a portion of the sleeve is sandwiched between the retaining element and the ridge; and

attaching at least one tie member to the retaining element to lock the retaining element to another retaining element mounted upon an end of another conduit, such that the retaining elements are prevented from moving past the ridge and prevented from moving away from the ridge.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising continuing to seal the edge trim, sleeve and retaining element joint as the shape of the conduit experiences deflection due to internal pressure.

7. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein mounting the edge trim comprises mounting the edge trim upon an exterior surface of the end of the conduit.